

ABOUT GROWTH

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WASHINGTON STATE
COMMUNITY, TRADE AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Building Foundations for the Future

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Buses and urban growth in the central Puget Sound region

By Ned Conroy
Senior Planner, Puget Sound Regional Council

Well over 100 million trips were made last year on public transportation in the central Puget Sound region. A large majority of those trips were on buses.

Buses play, and will continue to play, an important role in the public transportation services of the region.

As local transit agencies struggle with the impacts of I-695, Sound Transit is operating new regional express bus routes, connecting destinations in King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Commuter rail operations will also begin later this year and light rail service will be operating by 2006.

But even after these rail systems are in place, region-wide bus riders will still outnumber rail transit riders by more than four to one into the next decade.

Rail transit service, particularly light rail, has gotten a lot of attention as a tool that can help to shape local and regional land use patterns. Many regions in the country have been successful using rail transit stations as a focal point for fostering compact, pedestrian-friendly land use changes.

San Diego, Portland, and Denver, for example, have been able to attract a substantial amount of housing and com-

mercial development near recently built transit stations. In the Puget Sound region, many local communities hope to capitalize on these opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD) at light rail and commuter rail stations.

The Puget Sound Regional Council is currently working with local governments to identify and support land development opportunities at new rail stations as well as at existing bus transit stations and ferry terminals. Called the Transit Station Communities Project, the effort is being funded by a Federal Highway Administration grant as part of the federal Smart

Growth Initiative. Although buses operate differently than rail, they provide a convenient and relatively inexpensive alternative to driving. Buses can also have a similar impact on supporting and shaping land use



A project that includes housing, a hotel, a cinema, office space, retail, and a parking garage is being considered adjacent to Northgate's bus transit center.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PSRC

development patterns.

One of the strengths of bus service, flexibility, also has been its weakness when it comes to influencing land use decisions and development patterns. Because bus service is very flexible (routes changed and/or service reduced or eliminated), the development community has had some hesitancy to pursue development at transit stops. In addition, local governments have not promoted or fostered these opportunities in any significant way.

Things are changing, however. Transit agencies are making larger and more

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Martha Choe, Director
Busse Nutley, Deputy Director
Steve Wells, Assistant Director,
Local Government Division
Shane Hope, Managing Director,
Growth Management Program
Holly Gadbaw, Senior Planner
Rita R. Robison, Editor

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Smart development to reduce traffic

By Shane Hope
 Managing Director, CTED Growth Management Program

How can we reduce traffic problems, while our communities continue to grow? One solution is transit-oriented development. This can make sense even when a community has little or no existing transit.

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a term for development that can easily be served by transit — typically, bus, rail, light rail, trolleys, or even ferries. This kind of development makes it easy for people to get places in a given area without using a car. Older neighborhoods in cities and towns, from Seattle to Wapato, are good examples. Some new developments, like Issaquah Highlands, are also being built for TOD.

Such development does not leave out cars. Many people still want or need cars for various reasons. But they don't have to rely solely on cars. Instead, they can meet many of their daily working, living, and shopping needs by walking, biking, or riding some kind of transit.

TOD has homes, shops, schools, and workplaces located fairly close together and connected by streets and sidewalks. Parks, town squares, and greenbelts soften the space. When these developments are complete, both transit and walking are convenient for most people.

Even if a community does not have transit now, planning for TOD could make future service easy. The supporting land uses, densities, sidewalks, and riders will already be there. That will result in lower costs to add the service later, when the time is right. If transit does not get added for many years, the community will still have had fewer traffic problems because people in the TOD neighborhood could make at least some of their trips on foot.

The opposite of transit-oriented development is sprawl development with single-use zones, for example, scattered single-family houses on large lots that are far from shops, schools, or workplaces. Typically the shops and workplaces would be scattered over a wide area too. A major problem with this pattern, which has predominated since the



1950s, is that it makes driving almost mandatory. And it is a pattern that is very difficult to change later, after everything has been built.

Many communities, such as Bremerton, are planing now for transit-oriented development. That way, they can encourage new development and traffic solutions at the same time.

Buses and urban growth in the central Puget Sound region

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

substantial capital investments in bus transit facilities, demonstrating a long-range commitment to future service in an area.

Facilities such as the Tacoma Dome Station, the new Bremerton Transportation Center, the Everett Multimodal Station, and the Bellevue Transit Center are examples of this new commitment.

In turn, local governments are using these transit facility investments to leverage private interest and investment in TOD.

King County Metro has one of the most aggressive TOD programs in the country focused on bus transit facilities.

It is working with the local housing authority and a private developer to redevelop an existing surface park-and-ride lot that is served by a variety of local and express bus routes near the Microsoft campus in Redmond. When complete, the Overlake project will include 300 units of affordable housing, a 2,400 square-foot child care facility, and a 540-stall parking garage as part of a redesigned transit center.

Similar bus-related TOD projects are proposed in downtown Renton, Seattle's University District, and Shoreline.

In Snohomish County, development guidelines deal with development near major transit facilities and provide guidance for single-family residential areas, neighborhood commercial areas, and park-and-ride lots. The innovative TOD guidelines focus on bus transit, not rail transit. The cities of Mill Creek, Snohomish, and Everett have begun to incorporate these guidelines into local plans and development regulations.

Locke appoints new CTED leaders

Governor Gary Locke recently named Martha Choe as director of CTED and Busse Nutley as deputy director and director-designee for the soon-to-be-created Department of Community Development (DCD). Locke is asking the Legislature to split CTED into two agencies, DCD and the Department of Trade and Economic Development.

The Growth Management Program, which is included in the Local Government Division, will be part of the new DCD, along with the Housing and Community Services divisions.

"I'm excited to be here working on the issues that are the building blocks of any viable community," said Nutley. "The basic needs for food, housing, a safe and healthy environment, and sound infrastructure must be met before a community can look toward economic growth and prosperity."

Nutley is a graduate of the University of Washington and has extensive experience at the local and state levels as a county planner, county commissioner, state legislator, member and chair of the Housing Finance Commission, mediator, and facilitator.



Martha Choe,
CTED Director



Busse Nutley,
CTED Deputy
Director

Project consistency, best available science hearings scheduled

CTED's Growth Management Program will be conducting four public workshops and hearings in March on two new advisory rules that will provide guidance to local governments.

The Project Consistency Rule provides local government with criteria to assist them in analyzing the consistency of project actions with applicable development regulations, or in the absence of such regulations, the adopted comprehensive plan.

The Best Available Science Rule provides local governments with criteria for analyzing what represents "best available science" and demonstrating

how to include it in the development of policies and development regulations to protect the functions and values of critical areas. The rule also identifies ways to provide special consideration for preserving or enhancing anadromous fisheries, according to RCW 36.70A.172.

A brief workshop is scheduled from 6:30 - 7 p.m., followed by a public hearing until 9 p.m.

Call Matthew Ojennus at 360-586-4149 or email matthewo@cted.wa.gov for copies of the proposed rules.

Public comment will close April 1, 2000.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 1 | Water Resources Education Center, Conference Rm., 4600 S.E. Columbia Way, Vancouver |
| March 14 | Seattle Center, Center House, Conference Rm. G, 305 Harrison Street, Seattle |
| March 28 | Hal Holmes Community Center, 201 N. Ruby Street, Ellensburg |
| March 29 | Eastern Washington University Riverpoint Campus, 668 N. Riverpoint Boulevard, Spokane |

Light rail comes to Tacoma

By Donna Stenger

Urban Planner,
Tacoma Economic Development Department

In 2002, the first light rail line in Washington will run through the heart of downtown Tacoma. The 1.6-mile line is the initial segment of the planned regional light rail system.

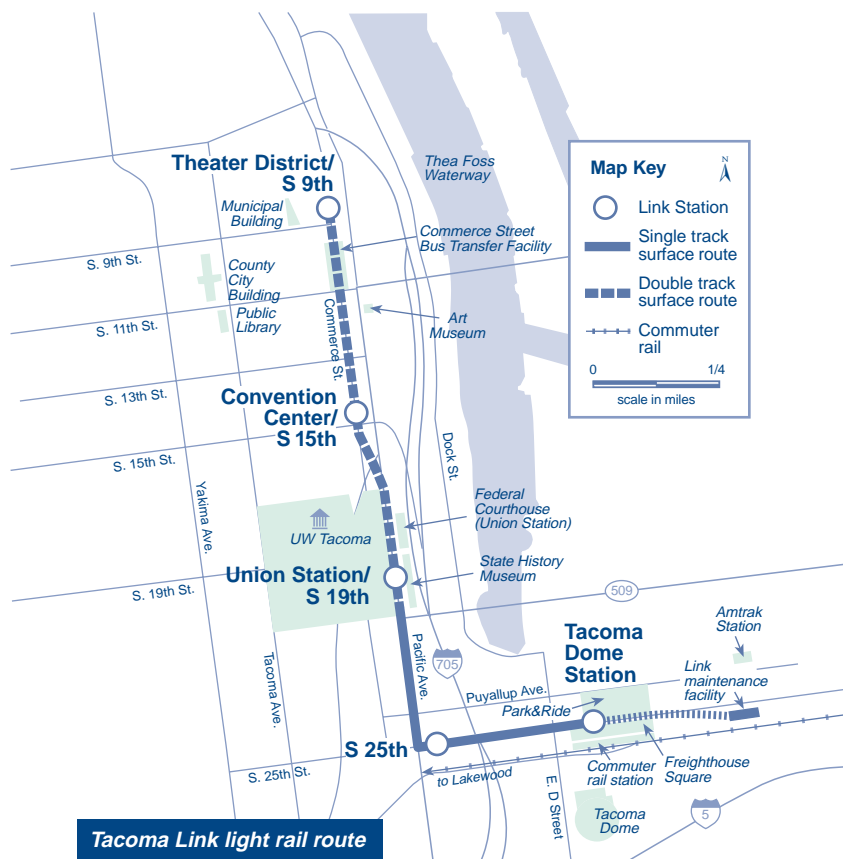
Tacoma's light rail covers a short distance but is a valuable link connecting Tacoma residents and downtown businesses to commuter rail, to regional and local bus routes, and to the light rail system that will ultimately connect Pierce, King, and Snohomish counties.

To prepare downtown for this new investment in mobility, the Tacoma City Council recently adopted a new zoning code to reinforce the planned transit investment and stimulate development.

Development along light rail corridors bolsters transit ridership which then fosters expansion of the light rail system. Because advanced planning for investments, programs, and projects to attract development to light rail corridors is critical to the success of the regional system, Sound Transit is funding the planning effort for downtown Tacoma. Besides encouraging transit ridership, Tacoma's interests included modernizing its regulatory code to proactively support downtown revitalization.

The city used a consultant team led by Mark Hinshaw, LMN Architects, to devise a zoning scheme centered around the transit investment. Eleven zoning districts were consolidated into four distinct districts and development regulations were reduced to a handful of pages.

The simplicity of the new code belies its substance. The new regulations reduce development barriers, foster a mix of uses, and provide built-in bonuses for constructing housing, enhancing design quality, and building pedestrian amenities. They also reduce parking requirements near light rail that may reduce development costs as well.



Tacoma Link light rail route

Tacoma is working to increase the number of people living and working around these light rail stations.

ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF SOUND TRANSIT

Urban housing is essential to the successful revitalization of downtown Tacoma. Urban housing, both in new and rehabilitated structures, is encouraged as the highest land use priority for the downtown area.

Experience has proven that light rail alone will not trigger development. Rather, light rail as a permanent transit route offers a framework for redirecting development.

A primary goal is to increase the number of people living and working around the light rail stations. Appropriate development includes businesses with large employee ratios; museums, entertainment or civic destinations that attract many visitors; and multifamily housing. The focus is more on the number of people a development attracts, rather than the actual use.

Combining different land uses allows for a greater sharing of facilities while fostering activity throughout the day and evening.

The successful redevelopment of properties along the light rail corridor will rely heavily on marketing, economic incentives, and continued public improvements to create an environment friendly to investors.

CTED guidebooks available

For a copy of the CTED guidebooks, *Optional Comprehensive Plan Element for Natural Hazard Reduction* and *Keeping the Rural Vision: Protecting Rural Character and Planning for Rural Development*, call 360-753-2222, or email ritar@cted.wa.gov.

Healthier communities by design

Julie Mercer Matlick
Pedestrian and Community Design
Specialist, WSDOT Pedestrian Bicycling Program

Many local agencies have known for some time how expensive “urban sprawl” is in terms of infrastructure and environmental costs.

However, new research being done by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) shows an even more expensive result of an auto-oriented land use/transportation pattern. The cost to health.

Studies have confirmed that regular, moderate physical exercise such as walking cuts the risk of death and keeps older people living longer. One study indicates “every mile older people walk daily lowers their death rate by 19

generation of children currently in K-12 due to their inactivity levels.

Numerous pedestrian-oriented efforts are taking place in the state.

At the state level, a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary team was chartered to recommend ways to reduce pedestrian collisions and change pedestrian and motorist behavior. Based on interviews with pedestrians, transit riders, health professionals, law enforcement and judicial officers, and motorists, the recommendations include land use and transportation planning, engineering, enforcement, and education applications. WSDOT is “testing” the recommendations, discussed in the report *Reducing Pedestrian Collisions*, with the city of Shoreline in a pedestrian-safety demonstration project.

The Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity, sponsored

develop more walkable and bikeable environments.

King County is leading a regional effort by establishing an annual Livable Communities Public Fair to educate citizens and policy makers on the impact of personal decisions which have significant effects on the livability of communities, such as making choices about where schools get sited to allow children to walk and bicycle to school.

The city of University Place, incorporated in 1995, had no bicycle or pedestrian facilities in the city. It has installed a roundabout, six miles of sidewalks and bike lanes, and a mid-block crosswalk with in-pavement flashing lights. The city has also installed 5,000 feet of sidewalks near schools.

Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department had completed a seven-year trail project when it opened the Cascade Trail. The 23-mile trail follows an abandoned railroad track between Sedro-Woolley and Concrete.

Since the early 1990s, the city of Kennewick has installed nearly 20 miles of wide curb lanes and bike lanes, along with over 21 miles of sidewalks.

The city of Kirkland pioneered the installation of in-pavement flashing crosswalk lights in Washington. Program evaluation shows an increase in the percentages of drivers who stop for pedestrians.

Benton and Yakima counties, the cities of Grandview and Prosser, and the regional WSDOT office have worked together to plan, fund, and build five miles of a paved pathway that completed a 13-mile link connecting Prosser and Sunnyside.

For more information, call 360-705-7505 or email matlicj@wsdot.wa.gov. Additional information can be found on the agency’s pedestrian and bicycle website at www.wsdot.wa.gov/hlrd/.

¹ *New England Journal of Medicine*, 1998.

² *Cancer Causes and Control*, November 1997.



A computer simulation of downtown improvements in Newport shows how the area is being made more appealing and safer for pedestrians.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WSDOT

percent.”¹ Another report concluded that 50 percent of cancer is preventable through, among other things, increased physical activity.² It concluded, “public and environmental policies can potentially powerfully encourage physical activity, ranging from construction of sidewalks, bikeways, and safe recreational trails.”

In addition, the CDC is predicting an outbreak of Diabetes Type II among the

by the CDC, is a partnership of public and private sector representatives to promote regular physical activity. One area of focus is increasing awareness of how important a safe walking environment is in increasing people’s ability to get 30 minutes of daily physical activity. The coalition is also promoting children walking and bicycling to school.

Communities in the state are beginning to make major efforts to

Planning near airports

By Teresa Smith, Aviation Planning Manager, WSDOT Aviation Division

The issues surrounding land use compatibility around airports are multi-faceted and complex – and the decision-making process involving land use is a challenging task.

Many cities and counties are now working with their airport neighbors by using effective policies and development regulations to help balance airport infrastructure and community identity, since the passage in 1996 of SSB 6422, now RCW 36.70A.510.

Nearly 80 percent of the 129 public use airports in Washington state are in rural settings and 13 airports are commercial service facilities. Airports: 1) provide critical access to the air transportation system, especially in remote areas of a community; 2) are essential components of public infrastructure; 3) offer service in emergencies; 4) provide strong support to local and regional economies; and 5) are exceptionally difficult to site or replace.

Many communities are making progress in the development of comprehensive policies and corresponding ordinances. Examples of local airport planning:

Jefferson County adopted effective comprehensive plan language through their essential public facilities policies.

Kitsap County adopted a height hazards ordinance that prevents obstructions around the airport's critical airspace. The Port of Bremerton received a CTED grant to develop a subarea plan around the airport.

Island County adopted a height hazards ordinance similar to other jurisdictions.

The city of Forks plans to combine planning efforts for the airport master plan and development of a subarea plan.

The Puget Sound Regional Council is coordinating with its municipal and aviation partners in the development of a Regional Airport System Plan to fold into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

Yakima County crafted development regulations to implement comprehensive plan policies that protect the numerous airports in the county.

The WSDOT's Airport Land Use Compatibility Program offers technical assistance to jurisdictions. See www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/planning.

Olympia's downtown parking story

By Sophie Stimpson

Transportation Demand Management Planner, Olympia Public Works Department

In the last five years, Olympia has been actively improving the downtown parking management system. This work supports downtown businesses and addresses rising traffic volumes that affect the quality and function of the downtown.

In 1992, the Olympia City Council decided to implement a downtown transportation demand management (TDM) program. Traffic volumes leading into the downtown are expected to increase more than 20 percent between 1992 and 2015, and commute trips make up 40 percent of the peak hour trips. The downtown TDM effort strives to reduce growth in commute trips by promoting alternatives to driving alone.

The first project of an advisory committee to guide the TDM program was an update of the Downtown Parking Management Strategy. The goal of the strategy is to provide parking for essential business needs while encouraging downtown employees to find alternatives to driving alone.

Working with key stakeholders, the committee arrived at a series of recommendations that incorporate TDM goals into parking management. Below are the principles that guided the update of the strategy and examples of Olympia's recent efforts:

Use parking cost and supply as a TDM tool. A reduction in the amount of free parking can affect drive-alone commuting. New parking meters benefit adjacent businesses by facilitating turnover and serve as a TDM tool by charging for parking where it had been free. Olympia is installing additional parking meters in the downtown, both to increase turnover for businesses and to institute a charge for commuter parking.

Make better use of existing parking. Better use of existing parking can offset the need to build future parking.

In downtown, private parking lots tend to be underused. Lot owners are encouraged to put up signs that indicate the times stalls are available to the public. The city is exploring a fee-in-lieu program, offering developers an alternative to building parking. The supply of parking that will be provided with the fees would be consolidated and managed to optimize its use.

Manage parking for the best use.

In downtown Olympia, priority is placed on accommodating the downtown user, based on the belief that supporting commerce will maintain the downtown's vitality. The city converted 350 stalls in the retail core to free 90-minute parking. This time limit meets the needs of the average customer's stay in the core, while making employee parking there prohibitive.

Use of the 85 percent-full standard.

The 85 percent-full standard is based on the understanding that parking becomes ineffective at 90 percent occupancy or above. This standard can be used as a guide for absorbing existing and future surpluses and as a trigger for adding new parking. This standard acts as a gauge for maintaining optimum parking supply.

Address perception with education. Fostering an awareness of how parking is managed and the benefits of parking management to the public can ease negative perception about downtown parking.

Develop TDM services and facilities along with parking supply. The parking management strategy and the TDM program strive to enhance improved access to the downtown core by meeting travel demand in many ways. Recently, bike lanes have been added to five major streets leading into the urban core. The city also supports the downtown shuttle system. In the future, improvements to the pedestrian environment are planned, as well as providing commute trip reduction services to downtown employers.

Corridor-based concurrency management in Vancouver

By Kevin Wallace

Transportation Planning Manager,
Transportation Services, City of Vancouver

As defined by the Growth Management Act (GMA), concurrency is designed to ensure that adopted transportation level of service (LOS) standards are maintained by balancing the timing and sequencing of development with transportation capacity improvements. Concurrency management unites capital facilities planning with local land use controls to ensure that adequate transportation facilities exist to accommodate traffic generated by a new development.

Last fall, following nearly three years of work, the city of Vancouver enacted a new corridor-based concurrency management program. With one exception, all corridors were determined to have available capacity to support future development. Mill Plain Boulevard east of I-205 was determined to be at capacity (as it was under the old standards), and development is effectively on hold in that area until sufficient mitigation measures can be identified.

The emphasis of concurrency review, under the new program, shifted from an analysis of individual intersections to a more holistic review of overall system performance. Using corridor travel times was preferred for two reasons: 1) this methodology can be measured at any given time and is more readily understood than complicated intersection analyses; and 2) corridor travel times more accurately reflect the true operation of the roadway.

As the largest city in the fastest growing county in Washington, transportation has become a very hot community issue in Vancouver. The new program was developed through an extensive public involvement program that included coordination with a

10-member community task force and dozens of public meetings, workshops, and hearings. This outreach has served to greatly elevate public awareness of transportation issues in Vancouver.

The new program includes a concurrency ordinance, an administrative manual that outlines the technical procedures, and the Mobility Management Element of the comprehensive plan. City staff will evaluate system performance each year through an annual "report card" process and will relate changes in corridor travel time to development activity and transportation improvements. The number of available trips for each corridor is then assigned for the next year.

The city is currently involved in a series of appeals on concurrency to be heard before the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board. While the city is waiting for the outcome of these appeals, city staff is working to refine the new program and identifying ways to better integrate alternative transportation modes and transportation demand management measures into the process.

Transportation concurrency is an important element of the city's growth management strategy. Basing transportation improvements solely on vehicular mobility is not consistent with the direction of the comprehensive plan. Excessive transportation improvements for vehicles often carry unwanted environmental, social, and financial costs. Setting and maintaining appropriate standards will involve balancing future growth envisioned in the comprehensive plan with overall quality of life objectives.

Principles for land use and transportation

By Patricia R. Decker, Director,
Planning and Community Development
Department, City of Bellingham

Transportation concerns seemed to dominate our planning in the 20th century. In this new century, community planning principles and the tools to apply them can help us prevent the "Anywhere USA" development of the past.

Planning principles: 1) Design with respect for the physical environment; 2) Design for interconnectivity; 3) Keep arterial traffic off local streets; 4) Keep non-residential traffic off residential streets.

A recent example: Wetlands surround a flat site where 179 units are proposed. Property ownership and environmental constraints limit access to one entrance from a local residential street and its single point of access onto an arterial. A mobile home subdivision and spotty wetland/stream system lie north. A developed industrial park abuts to the east. The local residential street to the south abuts a continuous wetland corridor.

Connections to the east would allow industrial traffic to use the local residential street as a short cut to the arterial street system. This type of "interconnectivity" is inconsistent with local policies and plans. Discretionary review and subdivision standards provide the opportunity to say "not here." Streets that end at abutting residential property to the west will provide future connections to the arterial network when adjacent properties develop.

Owners of the mobile home subdivision (located outside city limits and served by private roads) offer an emergency access to improve response time for fire and ambulance services in both developments. Pedestrian connections in the same location will minimize wetland/stream impacts and improve connectivity for residents.

Local tools and approaches: 1) State Environmental Policy Act options can include a mitigated determination of nonsignificance and an environmental assessment of alternatives; 2) Environmental/physical constraints can be identified with the design team before investment in design; 3) Subdivision standards can give discretion to require access and connectivity to achieve maximum density; 4) Pre-application neighborhood meetings can flush out concerns early; and 5) Communication among staff, neighborhood residents, property owners, and design team should be ongoing.



Transportation-land use link growing stronger in Spokane County

By Melanie Rose
Transportation Demand Management
Manager, Spokane County

Although mobility in Spokane County is becoming more of a challenge, an average commute time of 9.5 minutes to cover 5.8 miles means most residents have only recently begun to feel the effects of growth on the region's transportation system.

Over the past nine years, Spokane County's population has grown 9 percent to 414,500 in 1999. However, as in other metropolitan areas, the number and length of automobile trips far outpace the population growth. On average, over 1.5 million trips are taken each day in Spokane County, totaling over 6 million miles. This is expected to grow 134 percent by 2020, while population is expected to increase by a modest 7.6 percent.

"Designing a balanced, integrated multi-modal transportation system has been in our planning efforts for more than 15 years," said Ross Kelley, assistant Spokane County engineer. "Sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit access are standard elements in all new roadways we've constructed since 1990."

This commitment to multi-modal transportation choices is reflected in current efforts to complete Spokane County's Comprehensive Plan Update in response to the Growth Management Act. "We are incorporating a wide range of transportation choices to be achieved through commute trip reduction and transportation demand management efforts," Kelley said.

The link between transportation and land use in Spokane County has also been strengthened by the implementation of the state's commute trip reduction (CTR) law. Since 1993, the use of single-occupancy vehicles among targeted employees at 95 participating work sites has been reduced by 13 percent. This equates to over 3,200 vehicles removed from Spokane County roadways each morning.

In parallel planning efforts, the Spokane Regional Transportation Council has been exploring the possibility of developing a high-capacity transportation system in the Spokane area. Studies have been conducted which indicate the corridor from the Central Business District east to Liberty Lake holds the most promise for such a system. And, the city of Spokane is in the midst of defining the city's plan for

preferred future growth, known as the Spokane Horizons process. Sponsored by the planning commission, the draft plan includes three growth options that will ultimately impact transportation choices.

"We agree with the need for zoning which encourages concentrating growth in specific areas of the city and county, rather than allowing urban sprawl to continue," said Ted Horobiowski, member of the city's planning commission. "We are trying to turn the corner to encourage developments which focus on transit and other multi-modal options, rather than continuing to expand roadways. There appears to be a high degree of acceptance for controlled growth measures throughout the county and plans should be adopted by mid-year."

Commute trip reduction and growth management activities will continue to strengthen the link between transportation and land use in the minds of planners, elected officials, and the general public as Spokane County works toward agreement on key growth issues in the year 2000.



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